Worldbuilding and (Re)Mapping: Repurposing Early American Fantasy Fiction as an Environmentally Pedagogical Tool

Research Thesis

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by

Vince Bella

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Project Advisor: Professor Thomas Davis, Department of English

I. Introduction to Sterling & Austin

The canonical list of texts representing American literature is notoriously incomplete and imperfect, but the ongoing task of expanding this group of texts deemed worthy of our study is necessary for the promulgation of a diverse array of ideas and themes. Often, it is between the pages of well-documented literary history where a curious scholar finds the most interesting seeds of overlooked knowledge. The following chapters highlight one such pair of nearly forgotten American writers, George Sterling and Mary Austin, and how their environmentally-themed fantasy fiction can be remapped and repurposed for critical analysis in modern academic settings.

A. Gap in the Canon

George Sterling and Mary Austin exist today within a crucial gap in the American literary history. Only a handful of names remain to represent the pre-Modernist, early twentieth-century years between the Civil War/Reconstruction and World War I eras. Writers like Jack London, Upton Sinclair, and Sinclair Lewis have solidified their spots on collegiate reading lists and library shelves, while other previously-overlooked writers like Robinson Jeffers have seen a recent resurgence in critical attention. Sterling and Austin, while accomplished authors of several volumes of poetry and prose during their lifetimes, have largely fallen out of the favor of the American literary tradition. They do, however, deserve a share of the continued attention writers like London, Sinclair, and Lewis receive on account of all five being members of the same heavily influential artists' colony (Orth 195). Jeffers, a fellow member of this unique community, received poetic training in part from Sterling himself. The forgotten chapter of American literary history concerning Sterling and Austin begins in Carmel, California.

In 1905, after feeling dissatisfied with the fast-paced lifestyles of Oakland and San Francisco, George Sterling and his wife were among the first to move out of the city into the largely unsettled Carmel Valley region (Lanzendorfer). A series of correspondences with his friend and fellow writer, Mary Austin, convinced her to follow Sterling to Carmel—and, eventually, Sterling's Bohemian companion Jack London joined the company by the sea (Lanzendorfer). Life in Carmel was slower-paced and pastoral, as the initial residents learned to grow food for themselves and gather inspiration from the ocean (Wright). These three authors and their constantly-increasing number of literary guests would spend days sharing ideas, critiquing drafts, and refining skills in the secluded enclave of Carmel (Wright). They performed original plays as well as Shakespearean tragedies between the pines of the then heavily-forested region (Wright). Jack London captured his memories of his years at Carmel—complete with fictional representations of people like Sterling and Austin—in his novels *Martin Eden* and *The Valley of the Moon* (Orth 202). Clearly, the move to Carmel marked a significant turning point in the careers of Sterling, Austin, and London.

While Sterling and Austin lived in Carmel, they hosted several prolific writers and artists. One young writer showing serious promise—but, also, bored of working for newspapers and publishing houses—was Sinclair Lewis, who would eventually write the unanimously-acclaimed American classic *Main Street* (Wright). Additionally, Upton Sinclair joined the colony in Carmel for a period of time. Sinclair is best known for his political muck-raking books, and many of his attitudes and opinions were shared by the residents of Carmel (Wright). In 1914, slightly after the peak of Sterling and Austin's reign in Carmel, poet Robinson Jeffers settled in the area with his wife Una (Benediktsson 159). Jeffers is now an American literary legend for his environmental and existential poetry—themes and traditions which he carried on from his

Carmel mentor, George Sterling—and for constructing a tower out of granite brought up from the shores of Carmel Beach. While these still-canonical writers all paid visits and/or lived in Carmel alongside George Sterling and Mary Austin, these influential days in California rarely receive attention when detailing their biographies. Even less-frequently mentioned are the leaders of the Carmel lifestyle, Sterling and Austin—whose works contain similar themes and received high praises from their "canonical" friends.

Why, then, does this gap exist in the American literary canon? Like their companions, Sterling and Austin also experienced success during their lifetimes, publishing many volumes of prose and poetry and receiving positive reviews from critics. Over the years since their deaths in the years before the second World War, though, both were largely obscured from the literary canon (Benediktsson s156). That writers in such a respected circle like that of the Carmel authors could be forgotten is a sign that the American literary canon is perhaps too selective and demands a more inclusive upheaval. A major goal of this thesis is to re-open the door for writers like George Sterling and Mary Austin to receive a renewed critical focus.

B. Contributions to American Literature

George Sterling and Mary Austin, representatives of an even-more "lost" generation of pre-World War I American writers, deserve a share of the renewed focus given to some of their Carmel companions (Benediktsson 34). Sterling is best remembered for his evocative poetry, but he also produced several plays which were composed and performed in Carmel. Mary Austin's most famous piece, a collection of short stories and essays titled *The Land of Little Rain*, details life in the American Southwest and promotes her views on environmental conservatism. Additionally, the two writers' collaborations represent the spirit of the Carmel colony and provide a unique window onto the radical beliefs of the Carmel writers.

George Sterling enjoyed a brief run of success as the heir to Ambrose Bierce's literary traditions and a leading member of San Francisco's infamous Bohemian Club. Born in Sag Harbor, New York, Sterling followed his uncle to Oakland for work in 1890 at the age of 21 (Benediktsson 20). While in Oakland, he was frequently mentored by Ambrose Bierce, one of the country's most well-respected writers of short stories and poems (25). Sterling's first major poetic work, "A Wine of Wizardry," was controversially praised by Bierce as being the greatest American poem (38). He would continue to write and publish volumes of poetry from his time living in Carmel and later New York. His Decadent poetry and long verse-dramas came at the end of a particular artistic era; as Imagism became popular and gave way to Modernism, Sterling's more traditional and grandiose works fell out of favor and failed to generate much interest in the literary market. He died a respected yet somewhat obscure poet, best known for his writings about California and San Francisco—but his time in Carmel as the "high panjandrum" (34) of the entertainment became the subject of local legend.

Mary Austin was a prolific novelist and environmental activist shaped by her experiences in California. Born and raised in Illinois, Austin moved to the San Joaquin Valley region in 1888 where she began her study of indigenous life in the Mojave Desert (Orth 199). Around 1907, she moved to Carmel per the request of her friend George Sterling (199). While in Carmel, Austin helped to establish the Forest Theater, which continues to hold performances today (Lanzendorfer). Austin is most remembered for her first book, *The Land of Little Rain* (1903), a collection of essays and short stories about indigenous populations and the landscape of the American Southwest (Orth 199). However, she was also an early feminist and environmental activist, attempting to defend the supply of Owens Valley from being drained to Los Angeles in the first of the California Water Wars (205). After leaving Carmel, Austin settled in Santa Fe,

where she helped establish the Spanish Colonial Arts Society in 1925 (205). Her writing remains slightly more popular than Sterling's; *The Land of Little Rain* was established into a teleplay and presented on *American Playhouse* in 1989.

Sterling and Austin, while both living in Carmel between 1905 and 1910, contributed to the oft-forgotten pre-Tolkien literary fantasy tradition in America. Several of Sterling's more popular plays, such as *Lilith* and *Truth*, feature heavily-allegorical plots influenced by mythological and biblical characters (Benediktsson 106). Austin's novels and essays were steeped in the mysticism and oral traditions of many Native American and Spanish-American tribes about whom she wrote (Orth 199). *Outland*, a novel which this report will analyze in detail, is a blend of both Sterling's and Austin's particular interests and literary experiences. Eventually published under Austin's name but originally a story collaborated by both writers, *Outland* features a created race of people analogous in many ways to the indigenous peoples of California (Benediktsson 38). Additionally, the novel's pseudo-California setting and fantastical "talisman-quest" plot structure designate *Outland* as one of America's few fully realized works of fantasy fiction published in the pre-Tolkien era.

Outland also encapsulates some of the core values and beliefs of the leading members of the Carmel colony. Austin and Sterling frequently wrote poetry and essays in support of the Socialist beliefs of the time (Benediktsson 41). Both espoused pro-environment ideologies and moved to Carmel in a Walden-esque move out of the metropolitan lifestyle. *Outland* features a fantastical society free from the bonds of materialism and capitalism—main characters Mona and Herman are near-parallels to Austin and Sterling as they attempted to enact this fictional lifestyle in Carmel with the fellow members of their colony. When taken as more than a simple speculative novel about a completely fictitious society, *Outland* becomes rooted in a real vision

for what life in Carmel (and beyond) could look like according to its co-creators. The societal differences clearly favored by the novel's characters can be taken as representations of Austin and Sterling's philosophies regarding Socialism and the environment.

C. Literary Groups Outside the Metropolitan

Another reason to reexamine the Carmel-based literary group is for its distinctly anti-metropolitan setting and how it contrasts with the more-famous groups in London, Paris and Chicago around the same times. Especially relevant to an eco-literature course, this Carmel colony and the texts produced from within showcase the unique advantages that a non-urban setting can present when considering issues of the environment and indigenous societies.

The Carmel group of writers and artists features many similarities with the better-documented groups in major cities like London and Paris. The group in Carmel was a *destination* for these writers; none were inhabitants of the region before people like George Sterling and Mary Austin envisioned their alternative lifestyle and invited any who had similar worldviews to join. Additionally, Carmel was a haven not just for the literary arts but also for the visual arts. Several painters and photographers, including Xavier Martinez, Anne Bremer, and Arnold Genthe, also flocked to Carmel and exchanged ideas with Sterling and Austin (Lanzendorfer). The colony was fairly self-sufficient, as the artists were offered cheap plots of land and their presence eventually brought national attention to the region. Today, although the value of land in Carmel has skyrocketed and the economy has largely commercialized, the town still pays homage to its history. Austin's Forest Theater remains active, and Robinson Jeffers' tower, recognized now as a historical landmark, is open for tours (Lanzendorfer). The colony in Carmel of a century ago remains one of America's most significant—and somewhat forgotten—havens for the preservation and celebration of literature and art.

That the Carmel colony was able to exist outside of a traditional metropolitan setting emphasizes the critical need to reexamine the literature of "degrowth". Degrowth, a sociopolitical movement that states that overconsumption is the root cause of many modern environmental issues, is no better exemplified than in the movement of these writers from the San Francisco/Oakland metropolitan hubs to the uncorrupted shores of Carmel. While not advocates of the modern degrowth movement which did not take hold until after the peak of the Carmel colony, many of the writers expressed similar pro-environmental sentiments (Orth 207). As degrowth-inspired problems and solutions have become increasingly popular subjects to explore in modern speculative fiction (see genres like eco-lit and cli-fi), the works to come out of a much-older center for degrowth-like philosophies should not be forgotten. One such work, *Outland*, stands out as the premiere text about the ideological basis of the colony in Carmel.

D. *Outland* and Beyond

Outland, the fantastical novel co-created by George Sterling and Mary Austin, encapsulates the experience of creating a new society at the expense of the displacement of existing peoples. It is a text primarily concerned with a "Lost Race" surviving on the fringes of an ever-growing human society—a pattern of growth mirrored in the development of Carmel into today. It is also a text with a vast potential for pedagogical exercises centered around the genre-convention of map-making—a skill which may prove to be invaluable in today's burgeoning scenario-planning job field. *Outland*, a text existing at the intersection of eco-lit and low fantasy, is the definitive text to come from pre-war Carmel and should allow both Sterling and Austin to finally reclaim their rightful spots in the American literary canon.

Initially published as a novel by "Gordon Stairs," a pseudonym for writer Mary Austin and her collaborator George Sterling, *Outland* is a novel heavily influenced by the Carmel region

in California (Benediktsson 38). With references to places like "Idlewild" and "Miramonte" (Austin 26), as well as Big Sur mountain (201), *Outland* is a text as steeped in the Carmel region as were its creators. The story is set in a fictionalized version of this landscape occupied by the artists' colony, and it features two protagonists who closely resemble Sterling and Austin themselves. Mona and Herman, two academics and writers looking for an escape from their mundane lives, stumble upon a group of unusual people during a walk deep into the redwood trees along the California coast. They are brought by these people, known as the Outliers, to their settlement in a parallel-world called Outland. Outland, which exists both alongside and within Mona and Herman's true-to-life California, is the home to two competing tribes—the Outliers, who welcome Mona and Herman into their group, and their rivals the Far-Folk. The central drama surrounds the breaking of certain Outlier cultural traditions prompted by the introduction of Mona and Herman, as well as the deception of the Far-Folk. Both societies are chiefly concerned with obtaining and/or protecting the King's Desire, a legendary treasure trove of highly-valuable jewels and rubies.

Outland exists at the intersection of two conventional genres—eco-literature and low fantasy. Eco-literature or eco-fiction encompasses works of literature focused on nature and/or the environment. A genre that has gained increasing levels of popularity, eco-literature often falls under the speculative fiction umbrella by presenting hypothetical environmental "disaster scenarios" or, conversely, completely sustainable environments. Low fantasy, another sub-branch of speculative fiction, is characterized by featuring a fictional world somehow connected to and/or accessible through a representative version of our world (Wolfe 67). For example, *Outland* is set both within "real" California (as made explicit by the mention of actual towns/geological landmarks) and the fictional Outland (home of the Outliers/Far-Folk). *Outland*

could also be considered eco-literature because it features a fictional society focused on living sustainably in their environment. This crossroads of eco-literature and low fantasy is crucial for linking the study of a text like *Outland* with generating real-world environmental future plans, as the second part of this thesis intends to demonstrate.

Indeed, *Outland*'s handling of specific genre conventions like map-making and representations of the primary world imbue it with a unique potential for environmentally pedagogical engagement. Valuable skills, such as collaborative re-mapping and future scenario planning, can be harvested from *Outland* in a classroom setting. Major energy corporations such as BP have already begun placing a greater emphasis on the need for future scenario planning (Sage). After the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the most catastrophic man-made environmental disaster in our history, BP and other similar corporations have begun hiring experts to scenario-plan for counter-effects of future environmental responses in the event of further crises (Sage). Essentially, they are searching for people with the capability of generating realistic future scenarios based on current environmental and societal factors as energy use, natural disasters, and population distribution patterns (Sage). The modern scholar may yet be required to possess these skills as society faces the crisis of environmental change. *Outland* may be the text best equipped for the cultivation of these skills.

II. Introduction to Fantasy and World-Building

Outland exists at the intersection of two genres: eco-literature and fantasy. The eco-literature and future scenario-planning implications will be made clear in the forthcoming example activity in Chapter IV; the connections to the fantasy genre require a more thorough analysis, including a comprehensive understanding of the genre's history. The fictional landscape of *Outland* is uniquely positioned as a cross between typical primary and secondary worlds, which I designate as a "primary-and-a-half" world. Understanding the importance of this distinction, as well as the influences of pre-Tolkien fantasy writers like William Morris on the creation of *Outland,* is critical to justifying the reemergence of Sterling and Austin in the literary canon. Literary critic James Gifford, in his book *A Modernist Fantasy,* helps to elaborate the pressing social significance of a genre long overlooked.

A: Primary-and-a-Half Worlds

To best critically analyze *Outland* and any work in the fantasy genre, one must have a level of fluency in several unique defining factors and vocabulary terms. This task is not as daunting as certain modern genre conventions may appear; one need not be fluent in Elvish to comprehend the language of critical fantasy. Rather, the strength of *Outland* lies in its accessibility. As this thesis will later demonstrate, *Outland* can be utilized in a classroom setting as a gateway text for both the study of the history of fantasy in the William Morris "utopian romance" tradition and for broader discussion about modern environmental issues. The key to this comprehension stems from the concept of worldbuilding.

Worldbuilding is a creative practice generally agreed to be a necessary component for creating speculative fiction, but *good* worldbuilding is elusive and slightly harder to define. Many readers claim to know good worldbuilding when they read it; for the purposes of this

analysis, I will attempt to categorize several best practices and how they relate specifically to *Outland.* Simply put, worldbuilding is the process of constructing an imaginary world or series of worlds (fictional universes) for storytelling purposes—such as novels, films, and video game narratives (Stableford 312). The world of *Outland* includes both a fictionalized recreation of the Carmel region—known in the novel as Fairshore—and a region populated by fictional races of peoples (Outliers and Far-Folk). Successful worldbuilding allows writers to convey the social, political, geographic, and cultural dynamics of their fictional worlds as organic parts of their narratives (312). Worldbuilding is more than just listing the races, religions, values, and physical terrains of a fictional world in a table at the beginning of a novel; ultimately, the final product is the integration of creative information within the framework of a narrative designed for casual readers/readers unfamiliar with an author's imaginary world.

The worldbuilding process for *Outland* is documented as being a creative collaboration between Mary Austin and George Sterling during their initial stay in Carmel, California (Benediktsson 38). Although Austin is credited as the actual writer of *Outland*, the novel was initially published under the name "Gordon Stairs"—a pseudonym for both Austin and Sterling and a testament to the cooperative process of creation (38). Little can be definitively said about the timeline of the creative process or which parts of the worldbuilding can be attributed to Sterling and which to Austin; the following chapters will focus primarily on the *product* of the collaboration and analyze the components of the world of Outland itself. The worldbuilding in *Outland* contains a series of distinct geographic locations (but, unlike modern genre conventions, was published with no accompanying map) and two invented societies each with their own cultures, customs, and attitudes towards the Californians Mona and Herman. I will be approaching the world of *Outland* from a top-down approach—analyzing the world first before

its inhabitants, their cultures, and their relationships/histories with our society. Before this, however, one must understand *Outland*'s place in the greater fantasy genre and how it both adheres to and resists traditional classifications of fantasy.

A common distinction in fantasy fiction is between "high fantasy" and "low fantasy," two subgenres indicated by the setting of the created world (Wolfe 67). The names of the subgenres have nothing to do with the quality of the work—high fantasy is not fantasy of a higher quality. Rather, high fantasy is set in an entirely fictional/created world (also known as a secondary world) while low fantasy is distinguished by the intrusion of magic into our world (or the primary world). A popular example of high fantasy is J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* series, which is set in an entirely-fictional secondary world with an internally consistent set of rules distinct from our own (67). Low fantasy has long been associated with many works of Victorian children's literature as well as more modern examples like Lynne Reid Banks' *The Indian in the Cupboard* (67). Tolkien's world is entirely separate from our world; the world of Banks' novel is the primary world with the intrusion of magical qualities and the personification of inanimate objects. *Outland* would technically be considered low fantasy, as "Outland" itself is simply the name given to the same Carmel region by the Outliers. However, the inhabitants of this world are fictional—one must ask the question, if a people and their relationship to the land are fictional, can their world truly be considered real? Thus, a more specific understanding of primary-versus-secondary worlds is necessary for properly categorizing the dynamics of Outland.

The distinctions between primary worlds and secondary worlds are not conducive to explaining every created world, and the setting of *Outland* occupies the space between the two categories. The realm of Outland itself is not supposed to be read as a "world-within-a-world"

but rather an unmapped (by Herman/Mona and, by extent, American citizens) wilderness accessible from Fairshore/Carmel. The narrative is constructed in such a way that readers—and perhaps not modern readers—like Herman and Mona cannot disprove the existence of Outliers and Far-Folk in the uncharted hills and forests of California. The Outliers are not magic-users and they do not possess superhuman powers; in fact, they are technologically inferior to the Californians. They subside on abalone and other foods hunted and traded within their realm. Unrestricted by money and class, their society functions on acting for the well-being of the community—and it is likely through this altruistic way of life that the Outliers are able to remain undetected by those outside before Herman and Mona. There are, however, frequent references to the boundaries of Outland and how several Californian towns and farms jut into what was once the territory of the Outliers. Thus, Outland is both "real" and not—it is a version of the primary world that does not exist but *could* exist in the constraints/rules system of the primary world.

Thinking about the distinction between primary and secondary worlds in another way, I have devised two questions to determine the category of a fictional world. These questions are: (1) Does it mirror our existing world?; and, (2) Does it have the capacity to exist? If the answer to both questions is "yes," then the world represented is the primary world. If "no," then the world is secondary. However, a world like Outland would answer "no" to the first question but "yes" to the second. For a case such as this, I have created the term "primary-and-a-half" worlds. The concept is illustrated in the chart below:

	Does it mirror our existing world?	*Does it have the capacity to exist?*
Primary World	Yes	Yes
Primary-and-a-Half World	**No**	**Yes**

Secondary World	No	No

This concept of a world having the capacity to exist but not currently mirroring our world will be crucial to the development of my future-building activity. The idea is to encourage students to realize this disconnect between what *is* and what *could be* as the result of making societal changes, and *Outland* provides a unique example of a comparatively more ecologically-sustainable society existing within the same parameters of our world.

B: Pre-Tolkien Fantasy: The Utopian Romance

A common misconception is that J.R.R. Tolkien, beloved author of some of fantasy's most cherished works as *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings,* is the first writer of fantasy fiction. While Tolkien's works were certainly groundbreaking and continue to be the standard by which modern writers are judged, Tolkien himself was inspired by and contributed to an already-rich tradition of fantasy novels. One such writer, whose influence permeated both Tolkien's works and *Outland* itself, was notable British textile designer and socialist activist William Morris (MacCarthy 1-2). His novels *News from Nowhere* and *The Well at World's End* are some of the earliest examples of bridging the utopian and romance genres to create what we now think of as fantasy.

News from Nowhere lays the foundation for the future-building thought process catalyzed by *Outland*, and it is probably the most significant text for the foundation of the modern fantasy genre. Written in 1890, the novel represents William Morris' idealized vision of a futuristic British society free from private property and currency (MacCarthy 583-588). A founder of the British Socialist League and later the Hammersmith Socialist Society, Morris wrote about his vision of an improved society and addressed the question of the incentive to work in a society

based around common ownership (583). Rather than simply outlining his political beliefs in a manifesto, Morris uses a narrative as a vehicle for experimenting with how his proposed society might operate. William Guest, the protagonist of *News from Nowhere,* is a member of the British Socialist League at the end of the nineteenth century and, much like his author, struggles to find a way to translate his visions of society into a reality. Guest awakens one morning in the future—his London has been magically transformed into the London of the mid-twentieth century. While in the future, Guest visits familiar locations and learns about the new society living in England. Freed from the constraints of industrialism and rapid capital growth, the inhabitants of Morris' future-England find peace and harmony in the pastoral, and they only engage in labor that they find pleasing. Guest's journey concludes after a journey up the Thames where he is entertained at a pleasant dinner party. As he is finally getting comfortable in the new society, Guest reawakens back in his original time—but he now has the proper conceptualization for making his ideal society into a reality. Morris' use of the traditional chivalric romance "hero's quest" structure combined with the utopian portrayal of an idealized society laid the foundation for modern speculative fiction/fantasy genres, as his novel was among the first to use a traditional narrative form to explore a created world (583). Indeed, Morris' futuristic idealized England is a primary-and-a-half world; it does not try to mirror the England of Morris' time but, according to Morris' political beliefs, it is a world that *could* exist. The setting of *News from Nowhere* is perhaps the most significant influence on the composition of a novel like *Outland*; Morris demonstrated how to blend the imaginative with the possible.

After *News from Nowhere,* William Morris began to set his utopian romances in secondary worlds. *The Well at the World's End*, written in 1896, is even more intentional in demonstrating the influence of the chivalric romances of Arthurian writers like Sir Thomas

Malory (MacCarthy 606-608). The novel follows a similar hero's quest structure as Ralph, the youngest prince of the kingdom of Upmeads, journeys to find the fabled Well at the World's End. According to legend, drinking from the Well would grant longer life and a greater understanding of the world. After a perilous journey through Upmeads and Utterbol, a neighboring land ruled by a tyrant, Ralph and his maiden Ursula discover the Well. They drink and feel renewed and vow to bring justice to the world. After defeating the cruel lord of Utterbol, Ralph returns home to Upmeads and discovers that his home is also imperfect. Ralph leads his followers to defeat the invaders from the Burg of the Four Friths and restores his family to the throne of Upmeads. The novel ends with Ralph and Ursula being named King and Queen of Upmeads, and both reign successfully after drinking from the Well. The quest structure of *The Well at the World's End* mirrors that of *News from Nowhere* (606). Ralph is changed by his experiences at the Well as William Guest is in future-England. Both protagonists become enlightened by their quests and return to the places from which they start with a renewed vigor to improve the quality of life. These similarities between his works not only solidify Morris as a master craftsman and the founder of modern fantasy fiction but also demonstrates the influence of Morris' political writings on his later works (608). The story of Ralph is not unlike that of William Guest—both leave their homes to explore an uncharted world, and both return in the end to remedy the imperfections of their respective homes. Morris, in his blend of the utopian and romance literary traditions, provided the blueprint for utilizing created worlds as a vehicle for considering the rippling dynamics of broad social change—a theme which would be repeated in *Outland* and beyond.

Many of the prominent themes from William Morris' *News from Nowhere* are present in *Outland*, which bears the resemblances of a utopian romance. In many ways, the society of the

Outliers reflects the idealized vision of society in Carmel lead by George Sterling, Mary Austin, and their neighbors. Protagonists Mona and Herman come to Outland in a similarly-magical way as William Guest—and they are unable to return upon the conclusion of their journey despite knowing the landmarks. Life among the Outliers is, like the early inhabitants of Carmel, idyllic and self-sustaining. The Outliers believe in common ownership and are not restricted by competition and industrialism. Every action is for the benefit of the entire group—although Trastavera and Persilope lead the Outliers, all decisions are made democratically. Certainly, Austin and Sterling believed in many of the same ideologies as Morris, and they saw themselves implementing these behaviors in Carmel. Outland became an exaggerated recreation—complete with a fictional history—of the vision of society achieved in Carmel, and Mona and Herman personify their creators' enchantment with the utopic lifestyle. Like *The Well at the World's End*, Mona and Herman become slightly dissatisfied with their home world of California and bring a new perspective shaped by their experiences in Outland. Herman's initial thought was to introduce the Outliers to the authorities and governments of his world, from whom he believed the Outliers would receive state-sanctioned protection and perhaps a financial bonus should they relinquish control of the King's Desire, an ancient trove of jewels and rubies. Eventually Herman concludes that the Outliers should be left alone, and the novel concludes with the Outliers continuing to remain undetected in the wilderness of California. Mona and Herman, like the protagonists of Morris' novels, must now implement the lessons of the Outliers in their own normal lives. The extent of Morris' political influence on the fantasy genre is explored in greater detail in the research of critic James Gifford.

C: *Outland* and the Political

James Gifford, in his book *A Modernist Fantasy: Modernism, Anarchism, & The Radical Fantastic*, has already connected the significance of William Morris' utopian visions and socialist politics on his seminal fantasy novels. Gifford notes that Morris' more overtly fantasy novels—those written after *News from Nowhere* and including *The Well at the World's End*—were published in the years following Morris' departure from the Socialist League over disputes with other internal factions, including those advocating for anarchism. Morris' fantasy novels reflect his personal socialist ideologies from the final years of his life and retain several key philosophies which have now become staples of the genre, influencing such works as *Outland* as well as Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. The latter political orientations and frustrations of fantasy's father-figure have become inextricably linked with the foundation and progression of the genre.

After breaking with the Socialist League, William Morris both formed a new political group—the Hammersmith Socialist Society—and opened his own publishing house to produce copies of his new fantasy novels. Morris' Kelmscott Press was used to publish 23 of his own novels, including his groundbreaking secondary world fantasies including *The Wood Beyond the World* (1894) and *The Well at the World's End* (1896). James Gifford points out that, rather than depict a utopian society like in *News from Nowhere*, these fantasy novels focus "on a society without a ruler or state" (Gifford 102). Although Morris was less politically active after leaving the Socialist League, his later fantasies "embody a politics as much as his Arts and Crafts Movement" (98). This slightly-different political stance is evident in *The Wood Beyond the World,* a novel about a man leaving home after his wife's infidelity. Gifford characterizes the novel not as "a reactionary scenario of nostalgia for the safeties and trappings of aristocratic rule in a bucolic world of imagined class climbing" but that the main characters are working "against

those who would abridge their independence" (99). This political identity is significant to the fantasy genre as a whole because Morris' Kelmscott novels are generally read as more purely speculative and not an honest articulation of his political ideology as is more readily interpretable in *News from Nowhere*. This is to say that the Kelmscott novels, which are often called the original fantasy novels, are inherently tinged with their author's political/socialist ideologies, and their influence on such other similar novels as *Outland* are worth keeping in mind.

The influence of Morris' political leanings on the fantasy genre is quite significant because his foundational Kelmscott novels would eventually inspire numerous other writers following in his example. Gifford gestures toward this "question of a political and antiauthoritarian fantasy after Morris amidst and of the modernist 1910s and 1920s moment" (Gifford 103), and perhaps *Outland* should be included in this analysis. The politics of *Outland* reflect those of Morris in his utopian *News from Nowhere* as well as the society without a state in *The Wood Beyond the World*. The society of the Outliers is, in many ways, a reflection of the socialist ideologies discussed and practiced by Austin, Sterling, and the rest of the Carmel writers.

The following chapters will examine *Outland* based upon the significance of its primary-and-a-half world setting, the impact of William Morris' early "utopian romance" political traditions, and how *Outland* creates a space for itself in the American literary canon. Additionally, I will outline an exercise conducive for reading *Outland* in an eco-literature academic classroom setting.

III: *Outland* Analysis

Outland, the best surviving product of the fantastical worldview of Carmelites Mary Austin and George Sterling, is a novel rich with relevant critical topics to explore. The book's untapped potential to interpret modern environmental issues, such as rapid population growth and changes in global climate, may be the key to bringing Austin and Sterling into the focus of the American literary canon. The novel pulses with the spirit of environmental conservationism, and its imaginative landscape and alternate histories prompts the envisioning of attainable future scenarios. Reopening *Outland* in modern academic settings may prove invaluable in the effort to master the skills of effective environmental-change preparation, and it is for this reason that Austin and Sterling should be remembered and studied.

A: General Outline of *Outland*

The story of *Outland* centers around Mona and Herman, two dissatisfied academics seeking inspiration among the redwoods of California. While vacationing in Fairshore, the novel's fictionalized Carmel, Mona follows an unknown man deep into the forest beyond Broken Tree, a wooded trail named after a large fallen trunk. The man escapes her pursuit, and Mona returns to Broken Tree the next day to search for this mysterious person. She inadvertently finds a camp of people who call themselves Outliers, and they inhabit a land they call Outland which exists in and around the then-uncharted forests and hills of central California. Mona is welcomed by the Outliers as a visitor, and during her absence Herman attempts to locate her beyond Broken Tree. Eventually, Herman and Mona reunite, and the rest of the novel tells of their adventures among the Outliers and their run-ins with a rival society, the Far-Folk.

Part treasure-quest, part explorer's guide to Outlier society, *Outland* only gives subtle clues to the nature of the conflict between the Outliers and the Far-Folk. Both are tribes of

humans; that is, there are no distinguishing physiological features unique to the Outliers/Far-Folk that Mona and Herman and the rest of their Californian neighbors do not also possess. How these societies came to exist and remain undiscovered is unknown, but it is likely that they share a similar origin to other historical indigenous societies in the American Southwest—Mary Austin, after all, researched these societies extensively in her first book, *The Land of Little Rain* (Goodman 103). The modern conflict between the Outliers and the Far-Folk stems from contested claims of ownership of the King's Desire, a cache of "seventy bracelets of gold…cups of gold, and one particular goblet of chased work which an old king held between his knees, around the rim of which a matchless hunter forever pursued exquisite deer" (Austin 45-46). Additionally, the most mythical piece of the Treasure is a necklace "of red stones so splendid that every one of them was a little more splendid than the next one" (47). To the Outliers, this necklace and the rest of the Treasure is sacred and must be protected from the Far-Folk (and the House-Folk like Mona and Herman) at the extreme cost of a woman's youth. The protection of the King's Desire drives the plot toward a climactic battle between the Outliers and the Far-Folk.

The history of the conflict between these two societies is inextricably linked to the King's Desire, though none survive who remember any unbiased details. Mona listens as the Outliers sing songs of "the history of the place from which they had come to Outland, bringing the Treasure with them, pursued by the Far-Folk. Or perhaps it was they who were the pursuers, but the Treasure had been the point of their contention" (72). However it came to their possession, the Outliers currently claim ownership of the King's Desire and "made their honor the keeping of the secret" (72). To prevent any of their own from stealing the Treasure, or—worse—sharing its location with any Far-Folk, the Outliers devised a unique method of keeping the hidden trove a secret. A young woman from among the Outliers is selected to become the Love-Left Ward, a

temporary position during her first years of adulthood tasked with reburying the Treasure in a secret location and keeping this secret until her time as the Ward is over. Mona learns that "because the first disturbance over [the Treasure] that reft them from their country had been brought about by the treachery of a woman, they put a woman to the keeping" (72-73). The Love-Left Ward is also accompanied by four keepers, older men from the Outliers tasked with protecting the Love-Left Ward and who also know the location of the Treasure. When her time as the Love-Left Ward is complete, the young woman will drink Forgetfulness from the sacred Cup, which is brewed with a special blend of herbs that causes the Ward to forget all of the proceedings from the previous years—and, conveniently, the location of the Treasure.

The major action of *Outland* revolves around the ensuing drama when Zirriloë, the current Love-Left Ward, is tricked into revealing the location of the Treasure to a Far-Folk prisoner freely given to the Outliers for safe passage through portions of their land. This Far-Folk man, Ravenutzi, kidnaps the Ward and returns to his tribe with the Treasure. Mona, Herman, and the Outliers mount a counter-attack and attempt to retrieve the Treasure and Zirriloë, but they are too late, as Zirriloë dies to protect the ruby necklace. A repentant Ravenutzi offers his own life to the Outliers as repentance for his treachery, as do several of the keepers who failed to protect the Ward. These men bury the remains of the Treasure for a final time, and the secret dies with them as they are stoned to death by the leader of the Outliers. The novel concludes with Mona and Herman returning to Fairshore after drinking Forgetfulness from the Cup. Try as they might, they cannot again locate the passage to Outland beyond Broken Tree. Their memories of Outland, which begin to fade as the Forgetfulness takes hold, allow them to find happiness from within themselves and each other, and this makes them content.

Although they can no longer find the hidden entrance to Outland, Mona and Herman were once able to access the realm within a few hours' walk from Fairshore/Carmel. This proximity and several references to "House-Folk" farms and seaports would suggest that the trail beyond Broken Tree did not lead to a parallel world; no, Outland existed (and continued to exist after Mona and Herman leave) in the unmapped corners of the primary world. Indeed, Outland's position between the known and the unknown make it a primary-and-a-half world, and this designation is imperative to the study of world-building and future scenario-planning.

B: Outland: A Primary-and-a-Half World No More

The singular clue retained after drinking Forgetfulness is that the trail to Outland began at Broken Tree. In fact, the novel itself begins and ends with a contemplation of the trail at Broken Tree. *Outland* is a text enmeshed with physical geography and the environments of California; the titular realm functions as much as a character as do its inhabitants. What is important to consider about Outland the place is that, at the time of composition, it resembles a primary-and-a-half world—it does not mirror our existing world but it does have the capacity to exist. However, nearly a century after its publication, the world inside *Outland* has lost this capacity. With the changing geography at the foundation of any critical discourse, *Outland* can serve as a catalyst for the consideration of possible worlds and societies that lose the ability to exist within our environment as climates, governments, and imaginations change with time.

In the early twentieth century, the world of Outland was closer to a representation of the Carmel region than an entirely fictional created world. Indeed, Outland really only exists for the Outliers; some of the same physical geography is called other names by the House-Folk. While she is with the Outliers on the shores of the ocean (likely on a beach near Carmel, like where Austin and Sterling lived), Mona sees "fishing-boats from Pescadera crawl along the rocks"

(Austin 38). This "Pescadera" is likely analogous to Perscadero, a town on the northern side of the Monterey Bay. Mona's reference would position Outland along the California coast within walking-distance of Fairshore (the start of Mona's journey), which, along with relevant biographical information, would likely pinpoint the location right around the Carmel Highlands. Also at this waterfront location, the Outliers "gathered fish and abalones" (37), a clear reference to a favorite pastime of the Carmelites (Benediktsson 37). Further proof of the location comes from the novel's climactic final act, when the Outliers journey to a place called Windy Covers to retrieve the King's Desire from the Far-Folk. Mona notices that Windy Covers is near the edge of the Outliers' territory and that they "possessed all the district south as far as the Sur" (201). With Sur at the southern edge and Pescadero to the north, the region known to the Outliers as "Outland" overlaps nicely with the region known today as the Carmel Highlands. Therefore, it is not the physical geography of the region that designates Outland as a primary-and-a-half world; rather, "Outland" is simply another society's name for shared regions of the primary world. Where it stops mirroring our world is with the existence of the Outliers—there is no proof of a race like this occupying this region during the time of *Outland*'s composition. Today, however, even the hypothetical capacity for the Outliers to exist has been lost.

Once a primary-and-a-half world, Outland has become a secondary world today because it would be impossible for the Outliers to exist in the same capacity as they were supposed to at the time of the novel's composition. One of the most striking examples of this drastic change in landscape occurs when the Outliers encounter the intrusions of House-Folk farms. During the era of Mona and Herman—which is also the era of Austin and Sterling—the Outliers and Far-Folk would often secretly interact with the people of the "Ploughed Lands" (91), or the farms of California's Central Valley. The Far-Folk "would go down by night across the borders of the

Outliers to the farmyards for their scraps of metal, and ate fruit from the orchards" (91). Previously in the novel, we had seen the House-Folk be the discoverers of the Outliers/Far-Folk; the novel is told through the first-person perspective of Mona, and her revelations of Outland become the audience's revelations. This detail about the Far-Folk interacting with the Ploughed Lands positions *them* as the discoverers—which indicates both that the discovery can go both ways and that, obviously, the Outliers/Far-Folk and the House-Folk can exist in the same world without a mutual awareness. Perhaps the most significant suspension of disbelief in the novel would be to imagine a world today where this type of relationship could still be possible. The town of Carmel today is packed with expensive houses and upscale shopping districts (Dramov 200). The Carmel Highlands are a popular tourist destination, and hikers journey into the redwoods and hills every day. Roads have been paved linking together an intricate highway system. Farms in the Central Valley are larger and more industrial, and many are likely patrolled by law enforcement or monitored by GPS. Simply put, the Carmel region of today has evolved significantly since the time of Sterling and Austin. The fanciful, imaginative tale of a society that has not been proven but *could* exist is impossible to visualize today.

The significance of Outland no longer being a primary-and-a-half world is the evidence that the primary world has changed in irreversible ways to no longer be able to support an "Outland" or a society of people on the scale of the Carmel colony. The permanence of these changes is hauntingly foreshadowed by Mona, who tells Herman upon returning to Fairshore that "'It was a good time we had with [the Outliers]. I cannot bear to think it will never come again'" (Austin 304). Unfortunately, Mona is correct; Outland cannot exist today. A useful exercise when reading the novel today—and one that will be expanded upon in the following chapter—is to think about *how* the primary world has been altered to no longer sustain the Outliers, and how

these changes can be predictive for future crises to ensure the adaptability and sustainability of us the House-Folk.

C: Mapping and Re-Mapping: A Fantasy Without Borders

For Outland to have been a primary-and-a-half world, the text operates under the assumption that the realm was accessible without crossing some magical barrier to a parallel plane of existence—that is, that the trail at Broken Tree could be found again if only Mona and Herman remembered where to look. Unlike other created worlds in popular works of fantasy—such as C.S. Lewis' Narnia, which was accessible by walking through a wardrobe—Outland is not surrounded by borders and frequently overlaps with regions of California predominantly occupied by House-Folk. Additionally, a common feature among fantasy novels today is the inclusion of an illustrated map to help readers visualize the authors' created worlds. How, then, can we map Outland if there are no definitive borders between it and the Carmel Highlands? The exercise is not in vain; rather, visualizing a borderless created world is the key to interpreting *Outland*.

To map Outland, we must first unpack what information a typical map transfers to viewers. Maps, as we use them today, are primarily for obtaining the fastest route from one place to another over an already-charted landscape. These maps are top-down and display roads, highways systems, town names, and major environmental landmarks, such as lakes, rivers, and mountains. In Outland, there are no distinguishable towns; the Outliers take Mona and Herman to several different camps and settlements, but these locations remain mostly unpopulated when the majority of the group moves to another location. In fact, other than various wards and keepers, the Outliers usually stay together and travel in a large group. The camps themselves also have no real significance; the location of one camp was likely established because it was a

reasonable distance in a day's journey from another camp. The names of these camps come from features of the landscape, not from history or from former Outliers. For example, the camp at Windy Covers is so called because "the stir of a man moving through it [is] indistinguishable from the running movements of the wind" (Austin 201). How would a traditional map convey the reasons behind this name? How would the wind be represented? Where does the wind stop producing this sound and thus signify the border of Windy Covers? This last question especially is unanswerable—a map of Outland would need to do more than just list place names and borders because the places within Outland *have* no borders. In one sense, Outland is a liminal and continuous space because of these non-distinct place names and the fact that it would be impossible to determine when someone is no longer "in" Outland. However, Outland also has to be a definitive space because, as a primary-and-a-half world, it exists upon the same physical geology as does the state of California. The two dimensions of Outland can be reconciled—a borderless map can be drawn—by focusing the map not on the distances between places like Fairshore and Windy Covers but rather on the micro-details of each place. A map of Outland may have to be a series of three-dimensional visual representations of places—the traditional top-down structure is simply not conducive to Outland. Ultimately, the most viable solution seems not to "map" Outland but rather to "re-map" Carmel.

Perhaps the single greatest clue to a re-map of Fairshore/Carmel lies in Herman's final speech to Mona, in which he indicates that the trail to Outland can be found within his own heart (and, presumably, in Mona's heart as well). Indeed, the last words of the novel are that Mona "found [Outland] on his breast" (306), suggesting that the real trail to Outland is something intangible, something found from within. Outland itself is found "within" the state lines of California—although the Outliers do not know the land as California. The exercise of re-

mapping California requires an ideological framework of seeing the land as a neutral element; in other words, the physical space we have designated as "California" is not inherently called "California" and has no official title. From this point, we can consider on one single map how two or more societies have made use of the land and its immutable features (i.e. Sur, the ocean, Carmel River). Ultimately, in the quest to map a borderless primary-and-a-half world, one must heed Herman's instructions and look for Outland within the familiar region of California. There must be an awareness of the fact that there is no one definitive way to conceptualize Outland, just as there is not a single way to interpret and name any physical space on the planet. *Outland* effectively demonstrates Earth as a shared space, which will be a monumentally important lesson as climates continue to change and resources become limited and need to be shared as well. We can see this shared lifestyle in practice by examining the culture of the Outliers.

D: From Nowhere: The Influence of Morris

Much like how the world in William Morris' *News from Nowhere* is also primary-and-a-half, the society within his created world bears many similarities to the peoples in *Outland.* Indeed, Mary Austin and George Sterling likely were heavily influenced by Morris and other British socialist/utopian writers around the end of the nineteenth century (Goodman 104). While attempting to simulate the lifestyle in their Carmel colony, Austin and Sterling also designed their Outlier society in the same fashion at the future Londoners in Morris' *News from Nowhere*. The Outliers and the future Londoners possess similar customs and features, such as collective ownership of resources and an adversity to capital.

William Morris' utopian framework in *News from Nowhere* was heavily influenced by his Socialist League ideologies. When William Guest first awakens in the future, one of his first instincts is to pay Dick, the sculler, for helping him cross the Thames. Dick reacts with

confusion, saying that "'I have heard of this thing; but pardon me for saying, that it seems to us a troublesome and roundabout custom,'" and he laughs "as if the idea of being paid for his work was a very funny joke" (Morris 9). Guest also struggles to comprehend how any necessary work gets completed in a society without a financial incentive to labor. He is instructed by Old Hammond, an elder man with more knowledge of the customs from Guest's own time, that the labor-incentive method "'implies that all work is suffering, and we are so far from thinking that, that…there is a kind a fear growing up amongst us that we shall one day be short of work" (79). Indeed, to the future Londoners, "'*all* work is now pleasurable; either because of the hope of gain in honor and wealth with which the work is done…or else because it has grown into a pleasurable *habit*'" (79). Guest comes to realize that these societal values were instilled in the population after a major revolution which occurred in the mid-twentieth century (several decades after William Morris' own death). Guest is ultimately made aware that the new society is much *happier* than that which he left in the past, and they cannot understand why any society would plague itself with capital or work which is not rewarding to perform—even if the labor is intense. This future London was William Morris' way of fleshing out his radical politics in a narrative framework that would let an outside like Guest—an everyman and easy stand-in for any reader—ask questions and explore a familiar world with a completely different sociopolitical makeup. For Morris, the primary-and-a-half future London world was a political tool for representing his philosophies and ideologies, and a similar structure was adopted by Mary Austin for *Outland.*

Like the Londoners in William Guest's future society, the Outliers have no concept of money or capital, and they have significantly different attitudes about work than do the House-Folk. As Mona and Herman learn more about the Outlier society, they understand why the King's Desire is kept hidden with such fervor and strict memory-altering customs. Because of

the bloodshed between the Outliers and the Far-Folk as a result of the Treasure, the Outliers have decided that "the best thing to be done with wealth was to get rid of it" (Austin 73). When the Outliers hear about House-Folk customs—incentivized labor, competition, classes—they respond with shock. They ask incredulous questions to Mona, bewildered that she says "'that it is not so with the House-Folk? Do you not also serve the tribe most?" (83). For the Outliers, any work done is for the good of the whole, albeit smaller, community. Gathering food, arranging shelter, and guarding their territory from the Far-Folk are all tasked that are equally divided among the Outliers and performed with a strong sense of honor and duty that needs no financial incentive. They guard the Treasure partly from the Far-Folk and partly from any Outlier who should be infected with greed and a desire to claim the rubies and gold for himself. Additionally, leisure time is frequently interspersed with the day's work; Mona describes several times when the Outliers "lay quietly in the fern as deer lie…as if wakefulness were but a wind that stirred them by times, and sleep the cessation of the stir" (35). The pace of a society without competition amongst itself does not have to be fast, and the Outliers operate with a deliberateness and uniformity that necessitates no form of time management other than the length of a day.

Like William Morris, Mary Austin and George Sterling used the primary-and-a-half world of Outland to detail a society that operates within their sociopolitical framework. The arts colony in Carmel bore many similarities to the Outliers' way of life, and *Outland* was in part written as a way to showcase these philosophies to readers who may not have experienced the Carmel lifestyle first-hand (Goodman 104). Mona's outsider status and first-person focalization gives readers the same "everyman" perspective as does William Guest in *News from Nowhere*.

To Austin and Sterling, Carmel was a real-life utopia, and they borrowed William Morris' pioneering of the utopian romance to present their vision to a broader audience.

E: Bridging Eco-Lit and Fantasy

Outland, while representative of the pre-Tolkien, early-American fantasy genre, could face critical alienation with a reductive designation as "genre fiction". The novel is emblematic of more experiences than simply the imaginative. *Outland* encapsulates the experience of the non-urban arts colony lived by Mary Austin and George Sterling in Carmel, and the Outliers should be interpreted as part of the historical record of the early Carmel lifestyle (Benediktsson 38). Additionally, the text acts as a preservative for the environments of California at the beginning of the twentieth century. Because it is a text that tries to present its fictional world as being inextricably linked to the primary world, the environment and its effective sustainability play an important role in the ethos of *Outland*. *Outland*, then, should be read as a blend of the utopian romance, early-fantasy traditions and the distinctly modern trends of eco-literature.

The result of *Outland*'s bridging eco-literature and fantasy is a new and critically important genre for thinking through modern environmental crises: eco-fantasy. Eco-fantasy almost necessitates a primary-and-a-half type of created world; otherwise, in a completely secondary world, the environment would not need to conform to the limitations of our own. As previously established, the environment of *Outland* is our environment, and the ecosystem was shared between House-Folk and Outliers/Far-Folk. *Outland* allows us to ask critical questions that may arise in the event of population redistribution necessitated by environmental disasters. How can two completely separate societies exist in the same physical space? How can these societies engage in sustainable environmental practices that support both themselves and each other? Eco-fantasy is a genre that, through narrative, creates space for these topics and others to

be explored and to play out certain scenarios which, in any representation of the primary world, would still be hypothetical.

The elements of eco-fantasy are, by nature, speculative and require both a suspension of disbelief and an increase of belief in the conditionally possible. The suspension of disbelief is nothing new to fantasy, a genre that frequently asks readers to accept the existence of magical powers, humanoid races, and parallel universes. Eco-fantasy roots its imaginative qualities in environmental realities (or, in some cases, environmental fears) which allows writers and readers to speculate outcomes based on certain scenarios. *Outland* tackles the question of two societies living in the same physical space, and the interactions between Mona/Herman and the Outliers seem to suggest that a cohabitation of a shared space is not only possible but mutually beneficial. Indeed, along with a necessary suspension of disbelief, *Outland* encourages readers to believe in the conditionally possible, or scenarios that *could* be real under different historical and/or sociopolitical circumstances. Eco-fantasy gives the freedom to explore these realities that do not mirror our current environment but present a vision of a future that *could* potentially exist—in other words, these primary-and-a-half worlds. *Outland* deserves recognition for being an early contributor to this hybrid genre, and the current critical fascination with eco-literature would be remiss to overlook the significance of the more speculative eco-fantasy.

F: An Environmental Imagination: That Exquisite Excluding Community

Outland presents a significant opportunity for writers Mary Austin and George Sterling to reenter the American literary canon because of its capacity to consider the nature of alternative histories and potential futures. In fact, there is not more appropriate time than the present for *Outland* to reemerge as a text worthy of critical study and pedagogical engagement. *Outland*'s

place in the literary canon is both to address the historical significance of the colony in Carmel as well as to encourage readers to develop an environmental imagination.

One major function of *Outland* is as a study on the paradox of wanting to spread a Carmel-colony lifestyle around the world and wanting to preserve the sense of isolation that living in intentional seclusion provides. While in Outland, Herman devises a plan to unearth the King's Desire and use it to secure governmentally sanctioned lands for the Outliers. He wants to have "their social systems working in plain sight" (Austin 155) for all to see and replicate, but Mona cautions him of the danger this would bring to the Outliers. She believes that Outland and its people can autonomously protect themselves—that is, they do not need a "University protectorate" to sustain themselves in their territory—and that exposing other House-Folk to the Outliers could cause violence and a desire to conquer Outland, as the other indigenous Southwest tribes experienced. But perhaps most importantly is the fact that Mona does not want to share her discovery of the Outliers with the rest of the world because she feels a sense of ownership over their society. She thinks in response to Herman's idea that "it was such a unique and beautiful experience, and it was ours…and here was Herman willing to throw it open to the world as an experiment in sociology. If Herman felt that way about it, how was I to claim that exquisite excluding community of interest in which the adventure had begun!" (156). Certainly, creators Mary Austin and George Sterling shared similar feelings about their lifestyle in Carmel—a push-pull relationship between wanting to share Carmel and keep it for themselves.

Ultimately, though, time has proven that even the Outliers cannot be protected and kept hidden forever; the Carmel of Austin's and Sterling's time looks completely different from the Carmel of today. If nothing else, *Outland* allows readers a glimpse at what would now require a strong environmental imagination to visualize. A society existing independently and sustainably

in the hills and forests of California, undetected by maps or Global Positioning Systems, seems to our imaginations nearly impossible. With proper pedagogical guidance, educators can utilize the development of this imagination for future-building exercises by looking to the past for inspiration. The following chapter will outline one possible exercise for making use of *Outland* in a modern eco-literature classroom. The results of continual study and the implementation of environmental imaginations could result in future generations being armed with the skillset necessary for envisioning attainable solutions to crises; if these outcomes were reached, *Outland* would almost certainly earn a permanent spot on the American literary canon as perhaps the preeminent example of early eco-fantasy.

IV: Modern Classroom Applications

Mary Austin and George Sterling should not just be re-introduced to the American literary canon because of their ties to the literary group at Carmel, but also because texts like *Outland* provide further evidence of the link between modern fantasy and Morris' utopian romances. Continued study of the origins of this genre could yield a greater understanding of the processes by which imagined, yet attainable worlds—alternatively, primary-and-a-half worlds—can be realized and detailed. Indeed, perhaps the most intriguing component of *Outland* is the land itself; devoting efforts to comprehend and map the terrain of an imaginatively attainable society will utilize the same set of skills necessary to engage with future scenario planning. Consider, then, the stakes for including *Outland* on a modern academic course's reading syllabus. The instructor must decide how to introduce and guide the reading of an older text such as *Outland* while still shaping connections to modern issues of livable-environment change due to factors such as resource reallocation and population growth. What follows is a guide to teaching and framing *Outland* in a modern environmental literature classroom, along with a sample activity modeled from the novel to demonstrate the complexity of map-making in the twenty-first century.

A: Guide to Framing *Outland*

Outland occupies a place at the unique intersection of fantasy and eco-literature genres, the latter of which continues to increase in popularity and relevance in the twenty-first century. A book like *Outland* combines elements of both genres. The novel's supernatural elements, including the existence of the Outliers and the Far-Folk in an imaginative setting, align it with the traditional fantasy genre—more specifically, as an example of low-fantasy. At the same time, its narrative contains elements of eco-literature: it comments on humanity's impact on nature and

how the presence of the unnatural (the novel's "King's Desire" or capital/wealth) corrupts the natural. With a fundamental understanding of the two literary traditions *and* how *Outland* employs elements of both, students can make the connection early between reckoning with modern environmental issues and thinking imaginatively and/or *super*naturally. Establishing this link early could allow instructors to better introduce and facilitate the map-making exercises described later.

Once the generic conventions are understood, students then should pay special attention to how the Outliers, Far-folk, and House-folk are alike, and how they can be viewed in opposition to each other. Sterling and Austin deliberately create two alternative societies to highlight the fact that, although both are more like each other than they are akin to House-folk, they do not have the same needs and motivations. Their differences are both phenotypical (the Far-folk are characterized by their "dark" features) and based on values (both lay different claims to the King's Desire). Because they are unique societies, both will need to be accounted for on a map of the region—lumping the two alternative societies together would result in a clash of ideals and a constant threat of violence. This skill of recognizing the key differences between similar-seeming societies that operate in opposition to a dominant, powerful society (in this case, the House-Folk) is enormously important in re-mapping a region to include the needs and boundaries of more marginalized groups. Readers of *Outland* should be able to make distinctions between Outliers and Far-Folk (and, of course, House-Folk) before attempting to plot their territories on a map.

In addition to these elements of the fictional setting, an overview of the historical Carmel region and its early-twentieth century inhabitants will help lay the groundwork for *why* re-mapping is imperative today. Teaching *Outland* as the product of an artists' colony in a non-

metropolitan center demonstrates, at the very least, that these kinds of literary groups existed—but also that the works produced can be just as valuable at tackling issues of the environment, if not more so, than those written in major cities. *Outland* should be framed as the product of its time *and* place, for the created world of the text was heavily inspired by the world created by ringleaders George Sterling and Mary Austin in Carmel. Students should familiarize themselves with the geography of the region—the beaches, the hills, the giant trees—to understand how the different societies interact with and are shaped by the environment. This text, and the Carmel group as a whole, offer a unique way to think through a changing environment by offering not only a window to the past as it was historically—we can compare current Carmel to the Carmel of the 1910s and measure the changes that have already occurred—but also a model for conceptualizing attainable futures in the context of non-urban environments. *Outland* exists in a world caught between the primary (historical Carmel) and the secondary (Outland); to fully realize one is to consider and play with the structure of both. My map-making exercise, about which a detailed explanation and example follows, will allow students to do just that.

B: Map-making Exercise

Most of the action in *Outland* occurs in an imaginary world called Outland by its inhabitants, home to the Outliers and the Far-Folk. Outland is uniquely situated between two conventions of fictional settings. It is not like a traditional *secondary* world found in several speculative fiction genres like fantasy, as its inhabitants can see and interact with people and places in our primary world. Indeed, the Far-Folk "would go down by night across the borders of the Outliers to the farmyards [belonging to House-Folk] for their scraps of metal, and ate fruit from the orchards" (Austin 91). Given the ease of travel between Outland and the "real" Carmel region, Outland cannot be said to exist in a world that is geographically removed from our own.

However, neither does Outland necessarily exist fully in our *primary* world. After their departure from Outland and return to Fairshore, Herman and Mona are unable to relocate the entrance to the world of the Outliers. The trail on which they left Outland was "'very plain'" (304), but once across the border, Mona realizes in despair that "'we shall never find the trail to that country again'" (306). The ability for the trail to Outland to seemingly vanish and appear (as it does in the beginning on the narrative) at will to the House-Folk resembles qualities of other low-fantasy settings—the connection between the primary world and the imaginary world are tenuous and supernatural. While it shows qualities of both primary and secondary world types, Outland cannot be categorized definitively as one or the other.

Rather, Outland exists in the space between primary and secondary worlds as what I have dubbed a "primary-and-a-half" world—it is imaginary but exists within the same dimensions of time and space as our world; Outland has the capacity to exist as there would be nothing fundamentally different about our world with the existence of Outland. Therefore, if the two worlds (Outland and our own) exist on the same plane of existence, then the capability should exist of mapping Outland *and* the Carmel region of California together. What follows is a step-by-step approach to mapping Outland in a classroom setting, beginning with actually creating individually imagined maps of the fictional world. Then, after comparing their maps, the students should discuss the differences among their creations and work to devise one comprehensive map containing elements from as many different perspectives as possible. Included also is a contemplation of the ethics of this very exercise and an attempt to acknowledge the voices not included in the classroom discussions. The ultimate goal is to foster a collaborative environment-building skillset, which can theoretically be transitioned into real-world future scenario planning.

The initial goal of the map-making assignment should be to simply make a map of Outland—that is, the realm occupied by the Outliers and Far-Folk. To do so, students must be able to name and locate the various place-names created by Sterling and Austin to describe the neighborhoods and regions of the Outliers and Far-Folk. Outland can be broken into four basic regions, each with various sub-regions and landmarks:

- *Broken Tree*: "The trail begins at Broken Tree" (9), or so begins the first chapter of *Outland* and the journey into its imaginary world. When Mona and Herman first stumble upon the Outliers, they arrive in the Broken Tree settlement. The area is marked by the remnants of a camp, evidenced by a bundle of sticks discovered by Mona (18). The beginning of the trail to Outland is distinguished by a large pine which "stands on the upper bank of [a] creek, snapped off midway by the wind. Below the break two great sweeping boughs spread either way like the arms of a guide-post" (14). "Broken Tree" is the name given by Mona and Herman to the region, although the Outliers use the same name.
    - *Leaning Bay*: A pool of water in the Broken Tree neighborhood. Mona sees Ravenutzi washing/dyeing his hair in Leaning Bay when she first visits Outland (31).
    - *Cypress Point*: A promontory jutting into the "sea" (36), presumably the Atlantic Ocean or Carmel Bay. It is about an hour's walk from Broken Tree (31).
- *Deep Fern*: The second neighborhood visited by Mona and Herman in Outland. Deep Fern "is as far from Broken Tree as a strong man can walk in twelve or fourteen hours, walking steadily" (200). Deep Fern "lay in the middle of three half hollow basins looking seaward, and clearing the intervening hills" (56). Much of the first half of the narrative

takes place in and around Deep Fern. It is also home to the council of the Outliers, making it one of the most populated neighborhoods in Outland.

  - *Lower Fern/Deer Lake Hollow*: The lowest of the three basins in Deep Fern. The second name is derived from the small lake made in the basin made by a creek that runs throughout Deep Fern (56-57).
  - *Upper Fern/Leaping Water*: The highest of the three basins in Deep Fern. It is an "amphitheater of [a] terraced basin" that takes its name "from the long leap of the creek that came flashing down arch by arch from the high, treeless ridges" (67).
  - *Council Hollow*: Located between Deep Fern and a ridge called Bent Bow (see below), Council Hollow is the site of important meetings between Outlier leaders. It is here that Mona and Herman learn about "taking the Cup" and the King's Desire, as well as many other stories about the history of Outland (57).
  - *Laurel Bank*: A bank near the creek along which grow several toyon bushes. This is the site of Zirriloë's abduction (191-192).
  - *Moon Crest/Alderhold/Bent Bow*: A sequence of ridges that, if crossed in this order, form "a circle almost to Broken Tree" (177).

- *River Ward:* Another Outlier neighborhood beyond Deep Fern which borders the lands of the Far-Folk. The region is characterized by the widening of the river which flows through it—likely analogous to the Carmel River. Much of the second half of the narrative takes place in and around River Ward. The space is "thickly wooded" and the river runs "shallowly at seasons," and it is "here the Far-Folk trespassed most" (201). Indeed, the Outliers and the Far-Folk have fought many battles in River Ward (81).

- *The Ledge & Broken Head*: Essentially, the border between the Outliers and the Far-Folk. Walking to the Ledge would take ten hours from Deep Fern. The Ledge "runs, a great dyke of porphyry, with the contour of the hills, at the upper limit of tall trees and makes a boundary between Outland and the Far-Folk" (200). One of the few breaks in the Ledge is called Broken Head, and it is through here that the Far-Folk trespassed into Outlier territory and stole the King's Desire (201).
- *Windy Covers*: Situated between Deep Fern and the heart of River Ward, Windy Covers "passes over shallow, stony soil, in which nothing grows more than knee height" (200). Its name comes from the fact that "certain small winds [are] forever straying and whirling" which make it possible "for such a passage to take place unobserved" (200-201). Mona, Herman, and the Outliers initially camp in Windy Covers after leaving Deep Fern.
- *Place of Caves*: The hiding-place of Zirriloë and the rubies of the King's Desire. It lies "half a day beyond Windy Covers" (264). The geography was formed when "smaller stones and rubble from the slope had drifted down and choked the upper crannies between the boulders, so that under them were windy galleries and spacious caves" (267).
- *Singing Ford*: A place of easy passage across the river, called so "from the sound of [the water] going over the smooth stones" (201). It is also the site of Daria's wedding month (124).

- *Lands of the Far-Folk*: Little is known of the internal details of this region—what is given are the borders/boundaries of the lands occupied by the Far-Folk. The northern

border is the Ledge (200), and the Far-Folk possess "all the district south as far as the Sur" (201). One pivotal scene occurs on this side of the Ledge:

- *The Smithy*: The meeting-place between Ravenutzi and the Far-Folk after Ravenutzi hides Zirriloë in the Outliers' territory (219). Also, the site of the initial ambush between the Outliers and the Far-Folk (224). The Smith lies "in the pit of a blind canyon, all of rusty red volcanic stone" (221). It can be reached from River Ward within a day's worth of travel (223).

All Outland maps should, at least, include these aforementioned places and regions. While locating and grouping together the various place-names can be somewhat tedious, this initial step of the exercise should not be altogether too challenging for students.

The next portion of the activity is to incorporate the Outland locations onto a historical map of the Carmel region in California. Because we previously concluded that the setting of *Outland* exists in a "primary-and-a-half" world, all of the Outlier neighborhoods and landmarks should be plottable on a map (assuming that the trail at Broken Tree is currently visible). Figure (A) displays an archived 1913 map of the region from the United States Geological Survey (USGS). If *Outland*'s Fairshore is taken to be analogous to Carmel, then the area from the Carmel Bay to the east following the Carmel River could easily house Outland. According to the map, this area of the land is largely free of human/House-Folk settlements relative to the nearby cities of Carmel-by-the-Sea and Monterey. Additionally, the geography of the land follows a river (perhaps the Leaping Water?) and is marked by several canyons, which are frequently described in *Outland* as being part of the terrain. Regardless of *where* Outland would supposedly lie in this primary-and-a-half word, the important lesson to convey to the students is that Outland *could* co-exist in the Carmel region at the time of *Outland*'s composition because of the fact that

there is space enough for it to exist. The region has not yet been as extensively populated and built upon by House-Folk in the early twentieth century, allowing for the possible existence of Outliers and Far-Folk.

The present-day Carmel region, however, is much too industrialized to accommodate for the existence of any society other than House-Folk. Figure (B) shows a map of the Carmel/Monterey region of California from *Benchmark Maps*. Along with the physical geography, which remains largely constant with the earlier map, this map includes detailed depictions of highway systems, airports, and state-sanctioned park grounds. Surely, the "G16" highway would have decimated the Outliers' lands. This map asserts that the dual-existence of House-Folk and the occupants of Outland would be impossible in the present time period. When presented with the modern map, students will expectedly struggle to transfer any map of Outland to the heavily-crowded region.

What, then, is to become of Outland—or any land not industrialized by us, the House-Folk—in the twenty-first century? At the conclusion of the Outland map-making exercise arises the need for a re-mapping exercise. As students should conclude by the comparisons of their Outland maps with the present-day map of Carmel/Monterey, these modern maps fail to address both changes in climate/livable land and the capacity to house more than just a dominant social group. Indeed, something as seemingly innocuous as a road-map should inspire students to think critically about the attractions/methods of transportation that are privileged on the map as well as those that are not included. The need for updated and up-to-date, constantly evolving maps is self-evident; the land and the people living on it are constantly changing, and so should our maps of these regions. Once the *Outland* map activity is complete, a second exercise should ensue to address this need for more accurate maps.

This next exercise should be more collaborative than the creation of individual Outland maps; a wide-range of perspectives is necessary to account for a wide-range of peoples and places on any map. However, without a detailed and thorough method, this activity can appear overwhelming and seemingly impossible to account for every factor and resource. To assist with leading the activity, we must turn again to the fantasy literary genre and draw inspiration from another of its practices: worldbuilding.

C: Worldbuilding: Using the Fantasy Tradition for Re-Mapping

The culmination of the map-making activity should use *Outland* as a conduit for learning what is ultimately not a tool exclusive to literary criticism—the production of inclusive and adaptive maps. Upon completing this exercise, students should have the skillset to re-map regions of the primary world concerning ecological change and societal integration. By using the fantasy genre's own processes for imaginative world design (with *Outland* as our test subject), the end result is a way to methodically consider and generate solutions for modern problems concerning ecological and cultural displacement.

In his book *You Write It: Science Fiction*, author John Hamilton describes the process of worldbuilding as it pertains to speculative fiction. Worldbuilding is the process of creating "never-before-seen places" (Hamilton 8). The main question to ask when designing a world, according to Hamilton, is "what other consequences, advantages, or disadvantages would there be to living in such a world?" (8). He writes that not only is the physical location important to create, but establishing the *time* in which the story operates in the speculative world is just as important. Hamilton then gives three approaches to worldbuilding which can be useful in our example of re-mapping: "build from the ground up," "continue a trend," and "alternative history" (9). The second of these is perhaps the most relevant to the students in our hypothetical

classroom; Hamilton writes that "the world is faced with many problems today. Pretend what the world will be like in the future if things get worse" (9). In this way, worldbuilding can easily be re-purposed as *future-building*, or the process of devising livable worlds within the limitations and boundaries of our planet/world.

Hamilton establishes the connection between secondary world-building and the construction of possible realities on the primary world by continuing trends of global issues and playing them out in controlled narrative settings. This connection will be important to stress with teaching *Outland*; the ramifications of worldbuilding, which can be demonstrated with the setting of *Outland* as an example, can extend beyond the realm of fiction. For the second phase of the classroom activity, students should all collaborate on a project of future-building; that is, the creation of a possible future reality in a defined physical space existing on Earth. The need for future-building exercises is self-evident in the rapidly-shifting societal norms surrounding livability. With climate change as a looming threat to certain lived-on landmasses across the globe and climate-fiction (cli-fi) receiving serious critical attention in academic studies, the skills of future-building could be beneficial for any student to possess. By borrowing a process rooted in the fantasy/RPG tradition, classroom instructors can backwards-engineer a replicable method for conceptualizing future-building.

The collaborative document titled *Dawn of Worlds: A Cooperative System for Creating Fantasy Worlds* was originally devised for use with role-playing games such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, but its step-by-step method for worldbuilding can be adapted for our pedagogical purposes. *Dawn of Worlds* operates in three stages, each containing descriptions of how to speculate on three major topics: geography, races, and politics. The future-building exercise, then, is modeled in the same three-step manner, beginning with geography.

The first step of the future-building exercise would be to determine a defined geographic location upon which to speculate. Perhaps most applicable in conjunction with *Outland* would be the Carmel Valley in Central California, but any region on the planet will suffice as long as it is small enough to account for most populations/organisms and that it is at least familiar enough to the students (meaning, students should not speculate on a region with totally unfamiliar climates, races, and societal structures without representation from said region). Once the space is defined, students should research the particular climate and speculate how it may be altered in the near future by tracing recent patterns. *Dawn of Worlds* asks players to consider "mountains, islands, forests, [and] lakes" (Pesall 5); so, too, must we consider how the changing climate could affect landmasses, geographic structures/formations, and even coastlines. Infrastructures, as well, must be considered—such as adaptive energy, education, and transportation routes. Once the future-world itself is sketched on a map, then it can begin to be populated.

The second phase in the *Dawn of Worlds* method "is focused on the raising of the various…races that will dwell in the world" (5). For our purposes, this phase is centered around the organisms (humans and non-humans) who will be living in the future-realities on our previously-defined physical spaces. Students should not only consider how these new climates will affect humans' ability to survive but also the organisms upon which humans depend for this very survival. How will these new climates/changes in geography affect agricultural patterns? Will there be room enough for non-human living species in the same regions they populate today? These questions should also prompt additional research, but the crux of this phase lies around the placement of the various races and cultures of humans existing on the same physical space. *Outland* has already shown that conflict can arise when the existence one culture is not recognized by another culture on their map/perception of space and time; to avoid this in the

future-building exercise, students should attempt to account for all cultures existing on the geographic location and recognize their individuality/right to autonomy. The more descriptive a map can be pertaining to the demographics of peoples populating the space, the more accurately it can reflect the capacity for such spaces to hold these groups in the future scenarios.

The final—and perhaps most important—phase of future-building will be to consider the diverse societies and politics of the races populating our physical world. Once all of the races and cultures are accounted for in the re-mapping exercise, the final step is to consider how the races interact with each other and how they choose to govern themselves. *Dawn of Worlds* says of this phase that "cities or whole races may glide from noble to corrupt" (6) if they are exposed to conditions that do not recognize their right to self-govern. No future-building exercise would be complete by simply stating which groups/races of people will live in the adaptive worlds; some consideration must be given to *how* these groups will live and how to ensure an equal distribution of power. Questions to prompt discussion may include, but are not limited to: how can we ensure livability and sustainability for *all* races and cultures, not just the majorities? What political practices can be expected to remain in use from the current time, and what new developments can we realistically expect to see implemented? And, what steps have we taken to ensure the visibility of all races and cultures to avoid having a situation like *Outland*, where the Outliers are forced to exist hidden from House-Folk for fear of destruction? By conducting proper research on topics such as resource distribution and accessibility, cultural differences among various co-existing populations, and equitable consideration of basic human needs, a collaborative and ever-adapting re-mapped future can literally take shape in the modern eco-lit classroom.

The product of the future-building exercise should be not only a well-considered and collaborated vision of the future of a particular geographic location but also the cultivated skill of methodically accounting for as many factors as possible when trying to conceptualize *life* within the framework of modern environmental crises. By the conclusion of a unit/class centered around *Outland*, students should be able to replicate this solution-driven method that goes beyond the identification of modern issues and looks to generate livable futures that can ultimately be translated into necessary actions. *Outland* has the pedagogical potential to inspire students and readers to reimagine the primary world not as it *is* but also as it *could be*; armed with these processes of worldbuilding and *future-building*, students can move beyond the hypothetical to create attainable pathways to a more adaptive and inclusive world.

D: The Ethics of Worldbuilding: An *Outland* Example

With the ability to future-build and re-map comes the responsibility to do so collaboratively. Perhaps the most important takeaway from this second exercise is that the products represent possible futures, *not* prescribed realities. Needed at the conclusion of this activity is a lengthy discussion on the ethics of worldbuilding. Students must understand that to effectively map the future of an entire region, all people in that region should have a voice in the discussion.

A map represents more than the physical geography of a place and time—most importantly, it is an extension of those who live upon the land. The maps designed in this exercise, if created with care, are an effort to consider from multiple perspectives the resources necessary for sustaining any number of societies on a given area of land. However, without representation from *all* societies, it would be impossible to consider *all* resources. Important questions to prompt discussion in the hypothetical classroom could include: whose voices get

included in re-mapping the future? Whose voices get overlooked? And, how might we take action to include these voices? Students should be aware of the ethical responsibilities they assume when considering possible futures beyond the fictional boundaries of *Outland*.

An example from *Outland* itself can be used to emphasize these very responsibilities. While living among the Outliers, Herman and Mona develop close relationships with many of the people they meet beyond Broken Tree. Whereas Mona wants to keep their discoveries to themselves—she refers to them as "*my* Outliers, for I had imagined them, believed in them, and discovered them" (Austin 156)—Herman wants to bring the Outliers into House-Folk society and publicize their existence. They frequently discuss between themselves the ramifications of both options, and after a certain amount of time in Outland Herman develops an "idea" about how they can repay the Outliers for the generosity. Herman proposes that the Outliers "should take up their Treasure, abolish all this business of the Ward, and with the proceeds of the jewels buy themselves a tract of land" (154). This land, of course, would be sanctioned by the House-Folk (perhaps by Herman himself, in a grand show of pseudo-compassion). On this land, Herman claims that "the law could protect [the Outliers] from the encroachments of House-Folk and Far-Folk alike," and that he knows "a man in the forestry bureau who would be able to tell me how it could be managed" (154-155). In this example, Herman—and his friend in the forestry bureau—are engaging in the practice of re-mapping as explained earlier but *without* the necessary consideration to make his idea ethical. Obviously missing from Herman's idea is any input from the Outliers themselves; the Outliers have their own Council to discuss matters such as these, but Herman (the outsider) chooses to act on the behalf of the Outliers in what he views as to their benefit.

Mona provides a necessary check to Herman's bold idea. During another of his speeches to Mona insisting on the validity of his idea, Mona expresses that what she is "thinking about is what we would bring to the Outliers" (175). Mona is more aware of the differences between Outlier society and House-Folk society concerning property ownership and capital incentives, and she believes that exposing the Outliers to the jurisdiction of the House-Folk would destroy them. The narrative ultimately concludes without seeing Herman's idea come to fruition, and it is implied that Herman understands his original lack of ethical consideration when he asks Mona for forgiveness for not "seeing more in the first place" (305). Indeed, Herman's lesson is one that *must* be translated to students engaging with *Outland* and the practice of re-mapping, for the survival of a marginalized society like the Outliers may depend upon their grasping this concept.

Luckily, collaborative re-mapping is not an impossible goal. To ensure ethical worldbuilding, several steps can be taken even within the hypothetical classroom. First, the map size should not exceed the number of representatives engaged with re-mapping. The future-building exercise does not have to encompass a large region of land; rather, some of the most attainable goals and designs can likely be achieved at the smaller, more local level. Second, the end goal is not a single map but rather a collage of possible futures and realities toward which the collaboratives can strive. Not all members have to agree on every facet of the exercise for it to be a success; it will be successful if the members can disagree in an ethical and considerate way (an acknowledgement of differing opinions and a promise to continue researching). Third, all map-makers should have a similarly democratic goal—if one party desires a more totalitarian future, then the entire exercise is for naught. The reason for this step is self-evident in the example from *Outland*: we would bring destruction, not construction, to a society if we wished only to stick them in a sanctioned zone and strip them of their freedoms to govern themselves. It

is for understanding this necessity that Herman seeks forgiveness—we, too, must understand this before engaging in re-mapping.

The ethical considerations of worldbuilding are rarely discussed in conjunction with the fantasy generic conventions, but they may be the key to why *Outland* deserves more critical attention. This book, this idea collaboratively developed by Mary Austin and George Sterling, can teach readers not only how to imagine futures and alternative, co-existing realities but how to do so with a strong ethical framework. We should read *Outland*, yes, but of crucial importance is that we should learn from it as well.

Figure (A): Map of Carmel/Monterey region, c. 1913

Figure (B): Map of Carmel/Monterey region, today

V: Conclusion and Beyond

When Mary Austin and George Sterling moved to the uncharted, paradisiacal shores of Carmel, California, in 1905, they likely had little idea how critical their world-building skills could be—both in Carmel and on paper—for a generation of readers and students a century after their time. Sterling's imagination and Austin's prose introduced their pseudo-imaginary world to a wider audience and have laid the foundation for conversations in academic and environmental settings to consider the major real-world consequences of a constantly changing environment. *Outland* may be the missing link in the American literary canon connecting this bygone imaginative era with our current reality facing the threat of ecological disaster and the consequential displacement of humans.

A: Re-Analysis of Literary Canon

Outland and its co-creators Mary Austin and George Sterling belong in the conversation of American literary history alongside the likes of Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, and Jack London. Sterling and Austin, while both prolific writers of their own, best encapsulate the spirit of the Carmel colony and its lasting impact on the American literary scene; in this case, the whole (Carmel's proof of an artistic environment outside of the metropolitan) is greater than the sum of any one of its inhabitants' literary contributions. Additionally, studying Jack London without considering the strong influence of his fellow Bohemian and reveler George Sterling makes his already-legendary story incomplete. Furthermore, as Robinson Jeffers enjoys a revival in critical interest, so too should the works of Sterling and Austin touching on similar themes of environmental conservation and human existentialism. No study of the literary history of Carmel and its surprisingly long list of notable residents would be complete without George Sterling and Mary Austin.

This oversight of two influential writers such as Sterling and Austin strengthens the existing need for a complete overhaul and expansion of the American literary canon. Perhaps too much emphasis has been placed over the years on a homogenous group of writers from a limited number of metropolitan cultural centers. The question of what additional writers have been overlooked from smaller towns and environments like Carmel must be asked. The re-introduction of Sterling and Austin to the study of American literature should act as a catalyst for further exploration; in other words, the re-analysis should not end with the group from Carmel. Critically engaging with literary groups from non-industrial settings may provide modern students with a toolkit for carving a creative existence out of an environment tarnished by the rise and fall of certain industries. Indeed, the potential for solution-generative knowledge to be harvested from works such as *Outland* alone makes the critical legwork of re-analyzing the literary tradition worth the effort.

B: Re-Mapping of Our Primary World

Outland, a true work of speculative fiction rooted in a tangible reality, belongs on the syllabi of environmentally-focused literature courses everywhere. Despite the fact that the published edition of *Outland* contains no map—or, perhaps *because* it does not—the novel exemplifies the low fantasy genre convention of overlaying a fictional environment within a primary-and-a-half world. Students of literature could use *Outland* in a map-making exercise to demonstrate the difficulties associated with combining the two worlds—California and Outland—onto a single map. This map-making skill has a prevalent analogue in the scenario-planning field currently being explored by major energy corporations and sustainable city/regional planners alike. Map-making is a solution-generative exercise that can be used to

educate students the importance of inclusive collaboration and that society's seemingly-unsolvable crises can feel a great deal more manageable when broken into achievable sections.

Outland, then, can best be used as a tool for guiding students through these pressing topics and teaching the valuable skill of re-mapping. The goal of the exercise, then, is not *just* to generate a map of Outland/California but to harvest the skills necessary for generate livable future maps of our own primary world. With this knowledge and these abilities, the generation of students that re-discovers George Sterling, Mary Austin, and the fantastical world contained within *Outland* may be a generation better equipped to devise creative and sustainable solutions to the crisis of human environmental change. If successful, these students could achieve what the sought-after goals of the Carmel colony: to live an ecologically-mindful lifestyle like the Outliers.

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